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The C.I.A. in Chile

Disclosure that the Central Intelligence Agency authorized more than \$8 million for covert activities aimed first at preventing Salvador Allende's election as President of Chile and then at "destabilizing" his Marxist Government would be appalling enough by itself. It is doubly so when stacked against flat denials of any such United States intervention or policy to intervene, some of it in sworn testimony before committees of Congress by former and present Government officials.

In secret testimony before a House subcommittee last April, C.I.A. Director William E. Colby said his agency authorized \$500,000 to aid Dr. Allende's opponents in the 1970 election; \$350,000 to bribe Chilean legislators to vote against him when the election was thrown into the Congress, and \$6.5 million for subsequent "destabilization" activities and for helping anti-Allende candidates in the 1971 municipal elections.

This conflicts directly with testimony before a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee by former Ambassador Edward M. Korry that "the United States did not seek to pressure, subvert, influence a single member of the Chilean Congress" during his four years in Chile, and by former Assistant Secretary of State Charles A. Meyer that "we bought no votes, we funded no candidates, we promoted no coups."

During part of the period when Mr. Colby says the C.I.A. was financing "destabilizing" activities, Ambassador Korry says he was carrying on secret negotiations with President Allende, looking toward uninterrupted American cooperation and financial aid, provided Chile did not act with undue hostility toward the United States. These efforts, he says, were undermined by extremists in Dr. Allende's Popular Unity coalition.

Are we to believe that Ambassador Korry and the State Department were endeavoring to stabilize Dr. Allende's Government while the C.I.A. was trying to "destabilize" it? Could the American Ambassador in Santiago and the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs have been ignorant of what the C.I.A. was doing—or was the C.I.A. in truth a law unto itself?

And what of the role of Henry A. Kissinger in this sordid affair? Throughout the period he headed the so-called Forty Committee which supervises C.I.A. operations and, according to Mr. Colby, approved in advance the covert activities in Chile. Yet, Mr. Korry says that on a trip to Washington in 1971 he got approval from both Mr. Kissinger at the National Security Council and Secretary of State William P. Rogers for his proposal of cooperation with Chile in a compensated take-over of American copper interests. Mr. Kissinger told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "to the best of my knowledge and belief," the C.I.A. "had nothing to do" with the military coup that overthrew Dr. Allende.

It is now up to President Ford to find out who is actually in charge of United States foreign policy in sensitive areas of the world, and whether anyone in fact controls the operations of the C.I.A.

Of far greater importance than the bizarre spectacle of two United States agencies trying simultaneously to stabilize and "destabilize" an elected Government is that fact that an inadequately controlled C.I.A. badly served the American national interest by its dirty work in Chile. It matters not that the Soviet Union does far worse, that Fidel Castro intervened far more outrageously in Chile than did the United States, or that extremists in Dr. Allende's camp would in any event have destroyed the Chilean democracy on their own.

Clearly, the so-called C.I.A. "oversight" committees in Senate and House are failing to do their job. Representative Harrington of Massachusetts has asked the House Foreign Affairs Committee for hearings on the C.I.A.'s role in Chile. Senator Church of Idaho will ask similar action from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

If this enormously powerful agency is ever to be brought under effective oversight, Congress must rise to this distasteful but imperative responsibility.

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